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The Trouble with Modern Poetry

BY ELIZABETH DREW

"IN all perplexity," says Coleridge, "there is a portion of fear, which predisposes the mind to anger"; and nowhere is this more apparent than in criticism of contemporary poetry, where the older generation keep up a steady splutter of irritated bafflement at the younger poets.

> But Oh, good Lord, the verse you make,
> It gives a chap the belly-ache!

Why should poetry today have this effect on the older reader? Is there really some basic difference between present poetry and past poetry which cuts off the lover of the past from participation in the present? Is it really only lack of energy of mind which causes such readers to feel a sense of blank frustration? Or is it, as Eliot seems to suggest, that the character of man's view of himself and of his environment has become so much more complicated that difficulty is inevitable in any reporting of it?

Kay Vaughan

ELIZABETH DREW

There has, of course, always been poetry which is difficult. Sometimes, in order to understand it, the reader needs actual knowledge of the images the poet is employing.

> If you describe things with the right tensors
> All law becomes the fact that they can be described with them.

Sometimes the reader's ignorance may extend to the whole symbolism on which a poem is based. Or again, the trouble may arise from the extreme compression of the syntax, or the elliptical nature of the poet's use of language.

Such poetry as Donne's or Hopkins's or, indeed, Shakespeare's in many passages, is a poetry of condensed metaphor, and though it is always difficult, it often has an explosive force when its implications are realized, which makes it particularly powerful and brilliant. Many of its modern practisers, however, seem to me to forget that poetic beauty is a pied beauty, a dappled thing: one does not want it to be a series of depth charges, to be so weighted down with density of meaning that it cannot use its wings. We remember Donne as much for his directness—"For God's sake hold your tongue and let me love," "So, so break off this last lamenting kiss"—as for his close-packed metaphorical complexities.

But it is not the mere soldering of various associations which makes the "dislocation of language" in so much modern poetry. The language is often a reflection of a dislocation of thought, which is much more disconcerting to the reader. Poetry written in the metaphysical tradition is always characterized by the reconciling of widely divergent associations, but they are always associations suggested by some central idea or object *which is present in the poem*. The difficulty of a certain type of modern poetry is that the associations are the free associations of the individual subconscious mind and memory, and so may have no necessary relation to the "subject" of the poem. Furthermore, this object or idea may not be stated logically in the poem at all. Logical structure and sequence are replaced by psychological process, by a kind of cerebral and emotional shorthand. It is the poetry of obliquity of approach and ambiguity of suggestion. Associations leap as capriciously as the knight's move in chess, and the modulations of words are as complicated as the church tables of consanguinity. It works, says F. R. Leavis (trying hard to be helpful!), "by compensations, resolutions, residuums, and convergencies." One of its difficulties and weaknesses can be seen by quoting a passage from "The Waste Land," with Eliot's own note upon it.

> Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante,
> Had a bad cold, nevertheless
> Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,
> With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,
> Is your card, the drowned Phoenician sailor,
> (Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!) . . .
> Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,
> And here is the one-eyed merchant . . . I do not find
> The Hanged Man.

I am not familiar with the exact constitution of the Tarot pack of cards from which I have obviously departed to suit my own convenience. The Hanged Man . . . fits my purpose in two ways: because he is associated in my mind with the Hanged God of Frazer, and because I associate him with the hooded figure in the passage of the disciples to Emmaus in Part V. . . . The Man with Three Staves, I associate, quite arbitrarily, with the Fisher King himself.

Here Eliot confesses the purely arbitrary and private nature of all his associations, and the note is hardly helpful as an elucidation of them, or of the "meaning" of the whole passage; but the reading of poetry is made still harder when, instead of the logical content merely being masked, as it is here, it is omitted altogether, and the poet is held to "protect himself beyond the region of

Next Week

FRANK MOORE COLBY
By JOHN ABBOT CLARK

THE ISLANDS
By GERALD WARNER BRACE
Reviewed by Basil Davenport

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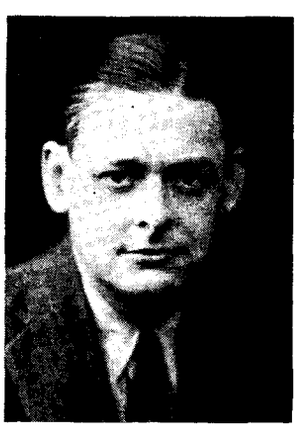
the concepts and words in which the normal thought processes are expressed." This kind of poem, we are told, "must be received directly, without question . . . it is impervious to reason, it has no discoverable meaning, it has immeasurable power. . . . The poet has created in words an objective equivalence of his emotional experience: the words may not make sense, but they make the emotion."[1]

IN DEFENCE OF HUMANISM.

The face of the precipice is black with lovers;
The sun above them is a bag of nails; the spring's
First rivers hide among her hair.
Goliath plunges his hand into the poisoned well
And bows his head and feels my feet walk through his brain.
The children chasing butterflies turn round and see him there,
With his hand in the well and my body growing from his head,
And are afraid. They drop their nets and walk into the wall like smoke. . . .
A flock of banners fight their way through the telescoped forest
And fly away like birds towards the sound of roasting meat.
Sand falls into the boiling rivers through the telescopes' mouths
And forms clear drops of acid with petals of whirling flame.
Heraldic animals wade through the asphyxia of planets,
Butterflies burst from their skins and grow long tongues like plants,
The plants play games with a suit of mail like a cloud. . . .[2]

This type of poetry is said to have a "kind of inevitability," and as the same critic[3] declares that "primarily poetry is an exploration of the possibilities of language," it is natural to ask: what possibilities of language does this explore?

Now I know that Eliot, in a much quoted dictum, has said that poetry can communicate before it is understood. No one will dispute this, but the question immediately arises: *what* can it communicate? The answer would seem to be that it can transmit associations, mood, atmosphere, coloring. Madame Sosostris gives us the creeps although we don't know why she is there; the rhythms of the conclusion of "Ash Wednesday" set all the nostalgias of the world throbbing in the heart. I must own that "In Defence of Humanism" communicates nothing to me personally except total bewilderment, but granted that an emotional coloring and contour can come through without any satisfaction to the understanding, the further question immediately obtrudes itself, Why should poetry ever be impoverished by communicating only these things, when it can communicate so much more? The modern poet replies, rather pontifically and portentously, "a poem should not mean, but be," and the rational reader again replies, with Wordsworthian persistence, "Why, Archie, tell me why?"—adding the comment that it is strange that all the poetry of the past which the world has agreed to call great has managed to combine meaning and being, and has always communicated an intellectual as well as an emotional content. To concentrate the interest and delight of poetry entirely into its ambiguous and oblique and obscure elements, as it is the fashion to do nowadays among lyric poets, is surely to weaken and impoverish language, not to enlarge its scope. For what makes language richer in its potentialities than the media of all the other arts, is its possession of this intellectual aspect, this content of ideas, recognized by everyone. In addition to this common logical basis, it possesses the further aspects of subtle emotional and sensuous appeal—rhythm, music, suggestion, color, overtones, modifications, interrelationships, and ambiguities, which can be exploited to their utmost by the poet, and are indeed the materials for much, though certainly not for all, of his peculiar magic.



T. S. ELIOT

Walker Evans

HART CRANE

This is one objection to the cult of obscurity—that it is finally an artistic limitation: but the impatience of the average reader with this specific modern difficulty is much more simple and direct. He complains of the obscurities on moral and human grounds: he feels that the spiritual and emotional function of poetry in his life has been betrayed by this new school. Has it?

The peculiar mood of what it is now customary to call "post-war" poetry, is the reflection of a particular social sensibility, which created a "spirit of the age" all its own. It was made up, one presumes, of reaction from the exuberant self-confidence of the nineteenth century, of the general nervous and emotional strain of the war years, and of the profound influence of the psychological researches of Freud and his disciples, with the resulting widespread interest in the problems of individual psychology. It has a certain sameness of coloring. The poets saw themselves alive in an alien world —a waste land, peopled with hollow men, with men measuring out life with coffee spoons, with parched and thirsty men seeking water. Aimless, negative, frustrated, they felt themselves, like Conrad Aiken, "an absurd cocoon of consciousness hung in the void"; tortured themselves, like W. H. Auden, with "the intolerable neural itch"; cried, like Archibald MacLeish, "How shall we learn what it is that our hearts believe in?"

And as the coloring of spirit is very similar, so is the subject matter. The poets of the past had almost all sung of the relationship between man and his own soul, between man and the universe, between man and his fellow men and women. But there was a definite shift of the general center of gravity as it were, in post-war poetry: a shift from a creation of the functioning of life to a creation of the nature of life; from behavior to being; from a study of the ways of God to man, to acute individual psychological analysis. "I, being the terrible puppet of my dreams. . . ."

Inevitably the result was the position of Rimbaud, "je finis par trouver sacré le desordre de mon esprit." Yet poetry may be the integration of the mood of disintegration, the intense and harmonious expression of the state of disharmony, as well as of anything else. "These fragments have I shored against my ruins." It is of the nature of "The Waste Land" that it should be composed of fragments, the fragments of a disintegrated personality, "a heap of broken images." It is its triumph, and at the same time the source of its extreme obscurity, that it is a psychological document in poetry, which means that it does not make statements about the writer's condition, and discuss it and explain it, but creates it, building up the present and past consciousness of the poet, in the words and images and associations which, to him, construct its reality. Since it is a strictly private record, since the essence of its reality is emotional and spiritual disorder, and since he does indeed "dislocate language" to obtain the effects he needs, it is not surprising that it remains largely unintelligible.

But the mature poet, just like any other mature person, wishes urgently to establish a satisfactory relationship between himself and the world he inhabits, and

(*Continued on page* 14)

[1] Herbert Read.
[2] David Gascoyne.
[3] Michael Roberts.

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South African Leader

GENERAL SMUTS. By Sarah Gertrude Millin. Vol. I. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1936. $3.75.

Reviewed by FLORENCE M. SNELL

WE have here a remarkable biography—the life of a South African lad of the usual Dutch and French (Huguenot) descent, with the usual South African background, who has become a great scholar, a great general, a great statesman and, with all the rest, the greatest force for good his country has yet known. And we have this development of his portrayed against a background of events of world interest—the Boer War, the making of the Union of South Africa, the South African Rebellion of 1914, and the part South Africa played in the Great War.

To have a history of the Boer War without any account of the Jameson Raid is like having the play of Hamlet with the part of the Ghost in Act I left out. The omission is a serious fault. But the story of the war, itself, is an unusual piece of work. The facts, revised, we are told, by Smuts himself, show that fairness of mind, that lack of bitterness which have become so essentially his. The simplicity of the tale, the description of the country—notably in Smuts's advance through the Free State into Cape Colony—showing it as it helped and hindered the forces of both sides, above all, the use of the war as a background against which the characters of the leaders, both Boer and British, are revealed—in all this Mrs. Millin shows great qualities as a writer.

The reactions of the Boer leaders to the events and the outcome of the Boer War and to the granting of responsible government are of vital interest since given these characters, these events, and these reactions, the Rebellion of 1914 and its outcome were inevitable. The finest thing in the whole book is the way Mrs. Millin works out the splendid loyalty of Botha and Smuts against the treachery of De la Rey, Beyers, and De Wet. The whole situation, as it stood just prior to the Rebellion, reveals itself in a parliamentary incident which took place soon after Botha's death, when Smuts, answering an attack on Botha by the surviving Rebel leader, reminded him of the night in 1914 when he and Botha were urged to join with them in the Rebellion and of Botha's answer, "Gentlemen, God Almighty *may* mean to make this country a Republic, but He will never do it through treachery." The personal suffering of Smuts and Botha in fighting against their "own people" is clearly shown, but it is doubtful if any one not living there will be able to understand at all what the Rebellion really meant to that country. It is equally doubtful if those who were there fully realize what these two great patriots did for us.

Mrs. Millin's portrayal of General Smuts, as far as it is related to events, is not only of great interest but of great accuracy. In her portrayal of him in the more personal aspects, she is less fortunate, for there she suffers from her handicap as an emotional, romantic novelist. In the earlier chapters, she is inclined to sentimentalize over him, finds pathos where none exists, and to some extent defeats her own ends. But as they read on, even those who do not know him will see him for what he is, a brave, true, gentle, courteous, typical South African gentleman, a learned man, a scientist, a philosopher, a great statesman who has done more than any other to make his great country what it is and what it promises to be. Of all the fine things in Smuts, his loyalty is the finest, a loyalty that has characterized him throughout. And because of this, one would like to scotch, once for all, the accusation that he is "slim" (crafty, unscrupulously clever). It is not merely because Smuts is shy and reserved while Botha was genial and essentially lovable that the Boers trusted the one and suspected the other. Botha was what he called himself, an uneducated man. He spoke to the university students after receiving an honorary degree from the University of the Cape of Good Hope. He spoke in Dutch and used an interpreter for the English. The backveld Boers for the most part still live in the atmosphere of the Great Trek with the superimposed hatreds of the Boer War. To them and to many others there is something suspicious about knowledge, science, philosophy, and fluent English. But, one time when the subject came up, Smuts's Professor of Mathematics at Stellenbosch, a Scot later knighted for his services to education in South Africa, said to me, "I have known Smuts ever since he entered my classes at Victoria College in 1866. I have watched his course all through the years since and I have never known him to do a crooked or an underhanded thing." Perhaps all great leaders, all great statesmen have been so distrusted, but surely none so unjustly in a land for which they have done such supremely great things so supremely well.

GENERAL SMUTS IN CAPE TOWN

This is a great biography, and reaches its highest point not in its historical and biographical elements but in revealing as has never been done before the relation of England and South Africa to each other and—through many years, by virtue of many mistakes—the final outcome of a policy of trust on the one hand and the development of a responsive loyalty on the other.

Florence M. Snell is Emeritus Professor of English Literature of the University of South Africa.

A Colonial Yankee at King George's Court

LET THE KING BEWARE! By Honoré Morrow. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1936. $2.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

MRS. MORROW, who is as good an historical novelist as we have writing in America today, has published longer, richer, and more elaborately studied books than this, but she has not published one that is more interesting or charming. It is a story of London in 1774-75; a story of George III, Dr. Franklin, Lord North, Admiral Howe, Lord Chatham, Mrs. Schwellenberg; of politics, intrigue, and looming civil war. In a little less than four hundred pages Mrs. Morrow actually goes a long distance toward recreating that dramatic moment in imperial history, toward making the personages named live again. She does more than this—she gives an elementary but still much-needed lesson upon the true relations of the colonies and motherland just before Concord. Readers of this book, and it should have many, will never again be able to think of George III as stupid, of Lord North as arrogant, or of the imperial ideal in 1775 as in any essential sense less praiseworthy than the ideal of American independence.

Doubtless historical novels of the Revolution would now fill a very considerable library; but Mrs. Morrow has achieved freshness by her unusual and courageous point of view. Her hero is a young Tory,

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Tristram Amory of Massachusetts, a distant relative of Lord North, who arrives in London with news of the latest disorders in the colonies. He has suffered from them himself. The Prime Minister puts him up. By his aid the young man shortly becomes acquainted with the King himself; an intelligent if not brilliant man, a lover of his subjects, a hard-working patriot. North himself is presented as he was: no great statesman, but a man of spotless integrity, of high courage, and of benevolence toward America. From his vantage point the loyalist Yankee has an opportunity to see and share the events which led to England's use of military force against the rebels. He witnesses Parliamentary debates, he hears Burke and Franklin talk, he sees the country gentlemen grumbling and voting. At points the politics is not expert. But it is always vivid. As Amory strives to bring Franklin and the King together, as men and circumstances join to defeat this plan to create an effective basis for conciliation, the reader develops a strong sympathy for what was essentially Franklin's point of view. The philosopher, feeling two patriotisms, one for the empire, one for his native land, hoped till the last to fuse them.

It may be objected that Mrs. Morrow feminizes certain scenes here, as she did in her Lincoln books. The clash of wills was sterner, passion ran higher, harder blows were given, than she indicates. But she has used materials from Frances Burney and other contemporaneous sources with great skill; she has told a swift and pleasing story; and she has thrown a clear beam of light upon a page of history long made murky by prejudice and error.

Unlike the Bee

By Lionel Wiggam

THERE is no terror of the tomb
For these, the early-dead and frail:
Across the amber leaf the snail
Has drawn his aimless, silver trail.
He does not halt, considering doom
Will crush his coil against the shale.

Nor is the bee an instant stayed
About his business in the flower.
He speculates upon no hour
When honey in the hive turns sour,
And fast against the earth are laid
His wings, pinned down beneath a shower.

No dreadful vision puts a mood
Of bitter terror in the thrush.
Till death itself, that liquid rush
Of song endures and will not hush.
No portentous shadow bids him brood,
Or halts the throat of bronze and plush.

But man: the earliest dream he knows
Is one in which he apprehends
The dust wherein each creature ends,
The loom wherein all fabric blends.
Unlike the bee, who quits the rose
And therefrom quietly descends.

Oscar Among the Philistines

OSCAR WILDE DISCOVERS AMERICA. [1882]. By Lloyd Lewis and Henry Justin Smith. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1936. $4.50.

Reviewed by Clyde Kenneth Hyder

ON January 2, 1882, reporters flocked to the *Arizona* to interview a tall, pallid youth whose profuse locks touched his shoulders—Oscar Wilde. The young man had been trying to live up to his blue china. His recent experience, however, could hardly be called, in esthetic jargon, sufficiently "intense," for Oscar was not altogether pleased with the Atlantic (a Boston paper punningly intimated that during his voyage he had made some "contributions" to it). Upon landing, he told the customs officials that he would declare nothing except his genius.

Tragedy was latent in his glands; his feet were already on the path that led to Reading Gaol. But now, leaping to the stage with the gusto of a Harlequin, he was cast for a comic rather than a tragic role. In the ordeal ahead, his histrionic talents served him well: as when with admirable aplomb he foiled the scheme of the Harvard students who came to his Boston lecture dressed in esthetic garb and bearing sunflowers; or when snobs like Stedman or Higginson damned him.

In Hegelian mood the gods had with divine appropriateness set the stage for conflict between a practical-minded nation and the apostle of the lily. This child-like poseur, this artist who professed to spend a morning in inserting a comma and an afternoon in taking it out, came to lecture in knee-breeches, to wear velvet "with a tender bloom like cold gravy" at his lectures, which were compounded mostly of Ruskin and water. In the presence of countless interviewers determined to lampoon him, he flicked ashes from his cigarettes, smiled with "the languor of a debilitated duck," and blew epigrams like bubbles at his tormenters: "America is one long expectoration." These scribes poked fun at Oscar's "putty" face, that of "a colossal maiden," his "ladylike" manner, his hair, his dress. If he denounced the cast-iron stove or praised the California hat, they sneered. Vast waves of ridicule welled up from the press. For a year Wilde was to be a nation's clown. He bore the gibes stoically, reflecting that they made good advertising. After all, of course, he was out for money—though not even money could bring him to lecture at Griggsville, Kansas: "Supposing I had founded a school of art there—fancy 'Early Griggsville.'" The name was too ugly.

Often Oscar must have regarded himself as a captive Gulliver in a hostile

Sarony

WILDE ON ARRIVAL IN NEW YORK

Philistine Lilliput. Messrs. Lewis and Smith's readers will understand why; they will smile sympathetically at Philistia, also—the lusty, brawling America of 1882, a land bemused by stories of Jumbo, Jesse James, expansive Sam Ward (lobbyist extraordinary), John L. Sullivan, and Mormon "sealed" wives. The osculatory prowess of General Sherman and the indiscretion of "Public Be Damned" Vanderbilt are typical of matters that clamored for that America's attention. Journals were publishing advertisements of electric corsets (did corsets really press one poor woman's ribs into her liver?). Ingersoll was shocking the country with his agnosticism and charming it with his eloquence. Inhospitable world for an esthete with monotonous voice!

By shifting the spotlight continually from Wilde to this pageant of American life, the authors add variety to the drama. Their book should not be described as essence of Boswell, Baedeker, and "Mauve Decade," yet the comparison will reveal something of its flavor. We see Wilde through the eyes of America and America through the eyes of Wilde, often with the help of newspapers he must have read.

The authors' investigations have been thorough. One might wish for inclusion of Wilde's unpublished letter to Charles Eliot Norton and a delightful letter about Salt Lake City (the latter is in Martin Birnbaum's "Oscar Wilde"). Helen Gray Cone's poem on Wilde and Swinburne (*The Century*, November, 1882) deserved mention. A striking error is the declaration that Swinburne sued Buchanan in 1876; the truth being that Buchanan sued *The Examiner* for publishing a letter of Swinburne's. Nor would Robert Buchanan have called himself an "art critic."

This book is a significant contribution to our knowledge of a picturesque figure as well as valuable Americana.

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Author of the "Confessions"

THOMAS DE QUINCEY: A Biography. By Horace Ainsworth Eaton. New York: Oxford University Press. 1936. $5.

DE QUINCEY AT WORK. By Willard Hallam Bonner. Buffalo, N. Y.: Airport Publishers. 1936.

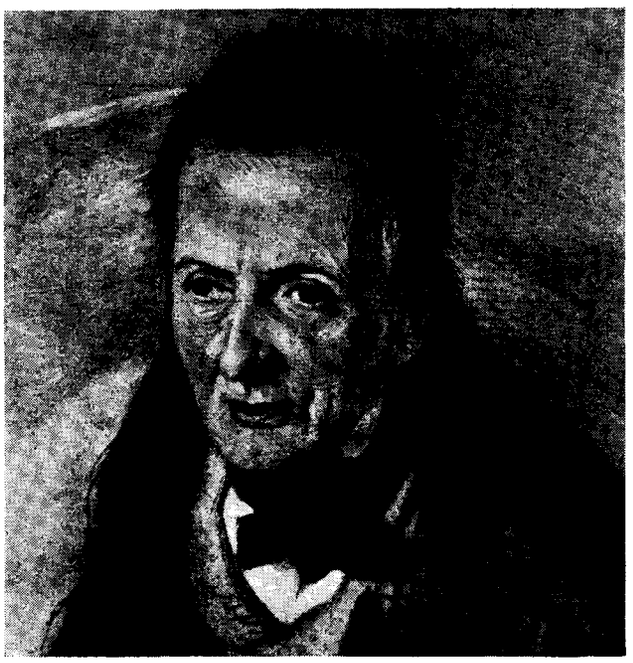
Reviewed by PHILIP VAN DOREN STERN

IT was an ironic twist of fate that caused Thomas De Quincey, scholar, historian, and linguist extraordinary, to become known to his own generation as a drug addict, the author of a work bearing the sensational title of "The Confessions of an English Opium Eater." And he has never escaped his destiny, for he is still known to most people only as the author of the "Confessions." The reader who wishes to find De Quincey's other writings is forced to seek scattered and dusty volumes in second-hand book stores. There is no good modern edition of the larger body of his work, and with the exception of a brief life published last year in London, nothing in the way of biographical writing has been attempted for more than thirty years.

It must be admitted that De Quincey has suffered comparatively little as a result of being neglected by biographers. A large proportion of his writings is directly concerned with the one subject in which he was most interested—himself. For material covering the early years of his life his biographers can hardly do more than borrow from the rich pages of his autobiographical writings. He was at his best when he wrote about himself even though he was sometimes inaccurate and given to romanticizing.

As a subject for biography he is difficult beyond all reason. His life splits into two parts so widely divergent that it almost seems as though he were two men. Until the time of his marriage he was the unhappy romantic seeking to escape the bonds of school and home. He wandered as a scholar-tramp in Wales and he dwelt in the dark byways of London. He took refuge in opium from the ill health that afflicted his whole existence. While at Oxford he became the friend and neighbor of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey. But after his marriage—when his family and his friends disapproved of the match—the whole pattern of his life changed. For a time he withdrew almost completely from the world. Then, under the pressure of urgent financial need, he overcame his natural lethargy and began to write for publication. The "Opium Eater" introduced him to the reading public and gave him an immediate reputation. The rest of his long career was spent as a professional writer. As the father of a growing family, harassed by sickness and debt, he became a fugitive from his creditors. He even achieved the almost unique position of being closed out of the debtor's sanctuary of Holyrood because of the debts he had incurred within the walls of the sanctuary itself!

Professor Eaton, in his elaborately documented biography, presents all the facts that can be discovered about De Quincey's curious life. He has permitted De Quincey to tell his own tale as much as possible, but he has cast new light on the later years which previous biographers have tended to treat rather cursorily in favor of the richer, more romantic early years. In his preface he disclaims any attempt to interpret the mind of his subject, and he admits that he has "no startlingly new thesis to propose." He rightly gives small attention to the laudanum that looms so large in the popular conception of his subject's life, for the key to the enigma that was De Quincey is not opium—opium served merely to heighten the natural fantasies of a mind richly endowed with an imagination that tortured itself endlessly. The clue to the mystery of De Quincey's life lies somewhere in his early London wanderings at the age of seventeen. There must have happened to him then some unnamed thing that was forever afterwards a source of terror and exaltation. He once alluded to it obscurely in a conversation with Richard Woodhouse. Just what this experience was we can never know, but it is evident from the symbols which haunted his dreams that Oxford Street was the heart and center of his agony.



THOMAS DE QUINCEY, 1855
From a chalk drawing by J. Archer

His was a mind that was almost impregnable to analysis even to those who knew him best, yet he himself possessed to an unusual extent not only the ability to appraise character but even to apprehend genius. As a boy he was one of the first in all England to read Wordsworth's poetry and he, above all others, saw in Coleridge's confused mind the stirrings of a great creative spirit. But none of the commentators who met and described De Quincey seems ever to have gotten beyond the superficialities of his voice and manners. Even in his own apparently frank confessions there is something furtive, something hidden, that never appears through the marvelously detailed reminiscences. He dwelt always deep in his own mind and he never revealed anything that he did not wish to show.

Professor Eaton has performed a commendable task in gathering together all the far-scattered documentary material that relates to his subject. He has corrected many of the errors and conflicting dates that appear in every previous biographical account. There are still hiatuses but the vagaries and uncertainties of De Quincey's character were such that it is not strange that his life has mysterious blanks in its record. He flitted like a little gray ghost from Grasmere to London and Edinburgh, leaving his papers in rented cottages and lodging houses. The eccentricities of his later years were famous, and he was always as unstable as the wind.

A definitive biography has long been needed. Dr. Eaton's book fills an empty gap in the history of the man who made the first quarter of the nineteenth century one of the most glorious in the annals of English literature.

The publication of "De Quincey at Work," an annotated collection of letters concerned with the last ten years of his life, is evidence of the growing interest in De Quincey as a writer. The letters, from various hands, show him engaged in the endless work of getting together material for his American and English collected editions, and they trace his declining days through the eyes of his family.

Philip Van Doren Stern has made a special and exhaustive study of De Quincey. . . . In addition to the books on De Quincey reviewed on this page, a new biography of De Quincey by Edward Sackville-West is announced for publication in the fall.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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NOBLE A. CATHCART....Publisher
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GEORGE STEVENS...Managing Editor

WILLIAM ROSE BENET } Contributing
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY } Editors

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English by Discipline

FOR some of those who attended the dinner of the New York Classical League in honor of the bimillennial of the poet Horace, the experience must have been like a dip into the past. Once again the Latin quips and quots crackled and flamed as in long ago Phi Beta Kappa dinners, and once again the familiar if half understood words of the great Romans echoed in pronunciations so various that Horace himself might have needed a dictionary.

> And shall the classics die, and shall the classics die?
> Here's thirty thousand classicists will know the reason why!

That was the mood of the occasion, a mood not without justification.

Those of the middle generation who are college bred still remember the dominance of the classics, and particularly Latin. They remember the felt necessity of an education in Latin for those who would write English. They remember the roll and swing of the English writers they were asked to imitate, whose sources could be dimly felt in the Cicero and the Virgil they translated so laboriously in class. Style in its essence, as was often told to them, was most successfully learned from the classics, and a writer in English could not be said to be formed until he could feel his Latin derivations as he wrote.

And it is probable that as they grew older many of them began to associate, and associate rightly, the rhetorical urge of a Ruskin or a Carlyle, the built-up rhythms of a De Quincey, the ponderous dignity of the nineteenth century moralists, with this same foster mother, Latin. They felt, and perhaps rightly, that a Gibbon, an Addison, a Dr. Johnson, and a Boswell, had learned to think in Latin, because Latin was not only the medium of their education but still for them a living speech. Yet they suspected that the rapidly expanding knowledge of the nineteenth century had made this education by the classics a little artificial, a grace more than a necessity. They began to believe that the sonorous style of Latinized English was no longer inevitable for educated men, was indeed often as incongruous in the expression of the new life and new ideas of the industrial age as a tail coat and knee breeches on a dweller in the new suburbs of a factory town. And so they began to welcome, sneakingly at first, then wholeheartedly, the classically illiterate prose of journalism, or to praise those scholarly writers of English who had found, without sacrifice of dignity, the idiom of a native life—the prose of such men as Hazlitt in England, of Thoreau in America.

But this is all past history. The reaction is over, the battle is won, the question is no more what has been gained in escape, but what has been lost in escaping. And certainly there has been a loss and a heavy one. English prose today is flexible, it is picturesque, it has an extraordinary sense for the specific word, it has a rich vocabulary, freely used. It lacks (speaking generally of course) grace, precision, and flow. Its general practitioners lack especially the power of putting into typical, definitive form the important things they have to say. They are good, and especially the Americans, at pithy phrases, but skill leaks out of them as they go beyond the sentence. They express adequately, but not finally, their most significant conclusions. Compare any anthology of the best essays, chapters, editorials, stories, or formal pronouncements of contemporary English, with a selection from the eighteenth century, and the difference will become immediately manifest. We shoot all around the target, and when we do hit it, shoot again. Thus it is extraordinarily difficult to find an address, essay, analysis, or warning in the last twenty years that has the definitive quality of the best essays of Emerson, of a review by Macaulay,—to stop far short of Burke and Swift.

The change—the failure, for it is a failure—is probably due to the disappearance of a discipline. We whose schooling is some decades back think of translation as a perfunctory boredom best remembered with disdain. Perhaps it was in our day, yet translation where, as in the heyday of the classics, the subject matter translated was felt to be of the highest importance, is one of the greatest disciplines of the mind. It is an exercise in two vocabularies; it is, what is much more important, an adventure in the high art of finding in one system of thinking and feeling the words which can express another and very different one. It is the finest of all training for that high art of life which is to know and justly express yourself in terms of society.

The lack of this discipline is reflected in the loose and tentative character of so much modern writing. We have won our fight for linguistic nationalism; we express ourselves in a diction we have made ourselves; but in the course of the rebellion we have lost power because of a lack of difficult practice in the skill of expression itself. And no wealth of descriptive vocabulary can entirely make up for that.

This is no argument for an education by the classics. That—in our exigent curriculum enriched by a dozen new knowledges—will continue to be an opportunity for specialists, a luxury for anyone else. But translation of felt importance, as a discipline, as perhaps the only way of realizing that language is a tricky, dangerous, yet adaptable and manageable mathematics of culture—such translation should become again a part of our education. And probably Greek and Latin, as representing cultures far removed from our own, will serve the purpose best, now, as they have in the past. Some later generations may find Chinese still better because even richer in a content that requires even more skill to bring into our own orbit. But the laymen at the Classics Dinner clearly felt that Latin was hard enough for their time.

Mary Johnston The death of Mary Johnston reminds us that there have been few historical novels more successful than her "To Have and To Hold." It swept the country at the height of our rediscovery of an aristocratic, honor-seeking America after the profit-making orgies following the Civil War. It was part tinsel, part silk, part old-fashioned stage illusion. But those who would see what this capable historian-romancer could do with honester material should read "The Great Valley," still the best story of Indian captivity and escape.

Ten Years Ago

A London Letter from "Roderick Random" in *The Saturday Review* of May 22nd, 1926, resolved itself into a discussion of four "young" English novelists who had recently been chosen by André Maurois as being responsible for the most "important work" of the period. They were E. M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, David Garnett, and Aldous Huxley, but, in the opinion of Sachem Random, no one of the last three had "*so far written anything worthy of rank beside 'A Passage to India.'*" He disapproved of "Mrs. Dalloway" by Mrs. Woolf which had just appeared. He felt that Mr. Garnett's work was leading nowhere, and that "*he must either repeat himself* ad nauseam, *or find an entirely different method.*" Of Aldous Huxley he was more charitable. He did, however, describe Mr. Huxley's philosophy as being "*so desperate*" that it could "*only be termed decadent.*"

Mr. Random also mentioned a new book by H. G. Wells in the course of his letter. He predicted that it would "*arouse exceptional interest.*"—Title—"The World of William Clissold."

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Letters to the Editor: *"Genius Is Not Enough;" "Rulers of America"*

Accumulated Issues

SIR:—For some months I have been so busy with my own book that I have allowed the issues of the *Review* to accumulate unread. But for three or four days I have been gobbling them down. It strikes me that it is becoming stronger all the time—more positive in expression, reaching out for reviewers with a greater variety of opinion, and increasing somehow the virtue of brevity in their reviews. It was a fine thing to publish Thomas Wolfe's attempt at self-analysis; and it is even finer to follow that with the splendid and constructive analysis by DeVoto. Follett's review of "Sparkenbroke" was also fine; and Morley's spoofing was glorious. How inevitable—but just as inexplicable—the horrified hurt of some readers! No really good thing was ever injured by parody.

VIRGIL BARKER.

Captiva Island, Fla.

Pious Dither About Form

SIR:—Mr. DeVoto patently does not even know what Thomas Wolfe *is*. Who ever said he was a novelist, anyway?—I do not believe his most hysterical admirers ever tagged him that, save as a term of convenience, or in the sense that he is a writer of book-length prose.

Why all this pious dither about form, as though Mr. Wolfe, in passing up this phase of "novel" writing so dear to the classroom's heart, were practising rather naive and unintentional heresy? Mr. Wolfe is no "novelist"; he is a purveyor of tides and tides of flowing words, bringing on their systole and diastole all the bright, terrible images hitherto submerged, dragged up at last from God knows how far and made vivid, articulate, and static for all time between the covers of a book!

I do not mean to imply that Mr. Wolfe is above criticism, but I do mean to say that he is being judged by the wrong measure. Mr. DeVoto has endeavored to encompass the ocean in his little bushel basket. The spectacle is a ludicrous one.

MILDRED C. ANDERSON.

New York City.

Wolfe Without Art

SIR:—Mr. DeVoto in what was otherwise a surprisingly illuminating article on Thomas Wolfe, talks altogether too much about the mystic Art of Fiction, and Mr. Wolfe's lamentable lack thereof. Now I don't hold any brief for Mr. Wolfe (quite the contrary!), but I do think there are a lot of other things that "America's Dostoievsky," "the James Joyce from the South," "Our Twentieth Century Dickens," needs much more than the Art of Fiction.

I imagine we may assume Mr. DeVoto has in mind some higher sort of Fiction Art. But just the same, although there is plenty that is radically wrong with Mr. Wolfe, Art of any sort is just about the last thing that could help him. With writers like Wolfe (or his little brother, Saroyan) it is only their complete lack of Art, their completely bewildered muddlement that makes their Yawp the least bit tolerable. With Art added, it would just be impossible to go near them.

BARNEY BERMAN.

New York City.

"HE'S JUST WRITTEN HIS HUNDRED AND FIRST JUVENILE."

Words Are Not Enough

SIR:—I am putting down Bernard De Voto's appraisal of "The Story of a Novel" to add my penny's worth to the growing symposium of ideas concerning Thomas Wolfe's work. "Look Homeward Angel" was a great book because Ben was in it; take out Ben and all that pertains to him and you have a story as pointless as —as "Of Time and the River." After all, an author must offer character and story. Words are not enough, either, if I may paraphrase Mr. DeVoto.

MOURINE HALLIBURTON MCGEE.

Tulsa, Okla.

"A Study of Finance Capital"

SIR:—In his review of "Rulers of America: A Study of Finance Capital," in your issue of March 7, E. D. Kennedy has made several errors of factual statement. It is not criticism to damn a book while misrepresenting what it says. Mr. Kennedy avoids any argument on the underlying thesis.

First. The title of the book is incompletely given. The important subtitle—"A Study of Finance Capital"—is omitted at the head of the review.

Second. When Mr. Kennedy wanted to discredit as too long my list of companies having some link to Morgan or Rockefeller interests, why did he confine himself to 362 in the "Morgan" list and 227 in the "Rockefeller" list and overlook the larger figures (444 and 287) which include companies for which no report on assets was available?

Third. He takes obvious pleasure in scoffing at the list of companies having Morgan, First National Bank, or Bonbright & Co. "as banker." He claims that *deposits* have no significance. I disagree with him about this—as did the Senate Committee investigating Stock Exchange Practices which obtained from the Morgan firm and published a list of companies having deposits in the Morgan private bank. Mr. Kennedy mentions only *deposits* although this section of the "Morgan" list is carefully defined as companies with which the Morgan inner group "have had relations through carrying deposits or underwriting security issues." I suppose Mr. Kennedy would hardly deny that the Morgan group has *some* industrial power and that investment banking has been an important element in that power.

I do not, as Mr. Kennedy asserts, "set up a Morgan influence" in Standard Oil Co. On page 40, in introducing this section of the "Morgan" list, I explain that it is made up of companies "mostly in some degree under Morgan influence but not controlled by the Morgan firm." And again: "Some of these, like the Van Sweringen brothers' Alleghany Corp., are really as close to Morgan as the inner area described above. Others, like two Rockefeller oil companies, are clearly outside of the Morgan empire and only include some business relations with Morgan."

Fourth. Mr. Kennedy gives a false impression of the way in which I present not only this section of the "Morgan" list but the Morgan and Rockefeller lists in

(*Continued on page* 19)

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Star-Crossed

BY JOHN MASON BROWN

ROMEO AND JULIET. By William Shakespeare. Motion Picture Edition. New York: Random House. 1936. $2.

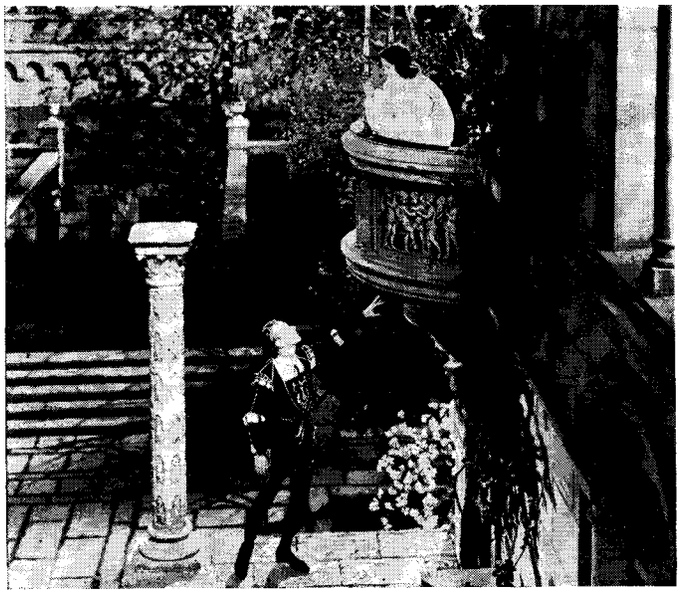
A POET'S true tongue and a camera's eye,
London's old Globe and California's sky!
Those star-crossed lovers that we all have seen
Now suffer again on the talking screen.

From Random House comes a cellophaned tome
Bearing Juliet to her Hollywood home.
In its new form will the rose smell as sweet?
Or will the nightingale have clayish feet?
Shall we suffer the pangs of fresh regrets
As those new Montagues and Capulets,
Those formidable foes, The Film and Stage,
Attempt by this union to end their rage?
Will they prove thus, in halting their enmity
Two households both alike in dignity?

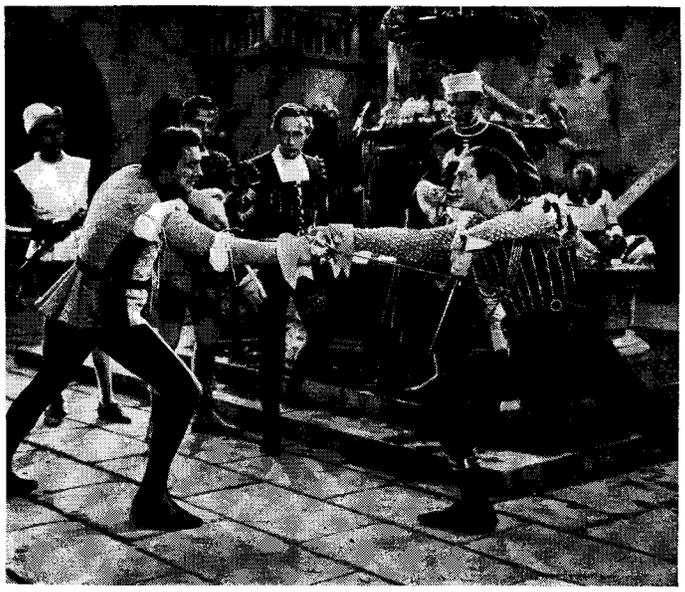
We can not bite our thumbs at Thalberg yet,
Nor say we do not stand in Shearer's debt,
Comment on Messel's clothes, and, what is more,
Criticize Howard or the Barrymore,
Until ours is the chance to glimpse their stint
Far, far removed from well-intentioned print.

Our only job's the published book to scan
To note how far it follows Shakespeare's plan;
To see how Avon's Swan, that Upstart Crow,
Who released his songs in a "Wooden O,"
Will sing them soon on a screen once still
But anxious now to lend its throat to Will;
To adjust ourselves to what may transpire
And, saluting Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer,
Take full advantage of this chance to gauge
If all the world's a film that once was stage.

Fear not, O believers in bardolatry,
Hollywood's just this side idolatry!
It's proudly suff'ring from a new disease
Which has attacked its titans in their knees.
Having searched the world for living writers,
They are victims now of Shakespeare-itis.
Once they worshipped at the shrine of Harlow,
Now they kneel before a friend of Marlowe.



THE BALCONY SCENE: *Leslie Howard and Norma Shearer.*



MERCUTIO AND TYBALT: *John Barrymore and Basil Rathbone.*

Artists always they give their loyalty
To an artist who asks no royalty.
"Too bad," they sigh, "he lived so long ago,
He might have done a swell scenario.
Still let's honor him and admit we owe
Him a great debt for this his Romeo.
Its passion is most recreational,
Its language somehow educational.
So Klieg lights on you, brave poetic man,
From each and all in the M-G-M clan."

Take but a fleeting, inquisitive look
Between the covers of this Random book
And you will discern why a Stratford boy
Has much good reason for posthumous joy.
Yes, praise from Sir Hubert indeed is praise:
Here's plenty to pay Will for all his plays.
First come some essays, then follows his text,
With Jennings' scenario coming next,
With all Willy's poetry printed as prose
Thus better adapted to filmland's nose.
It's just the same story we all do know,
Only shortened, sweetened, edited so
That each of its people speaks on the screen
Words to be heard by a girl of fourteen.
They've endowed it with peacocks, mobs galore,
But its major beauties are those of yore.
It has many more scenes than stage can give
But its verse seems destined still to outlive
Its long shots, its close ups, its high resolve
To gain new tears by a simple *"dissolve."*
It's reverently handled, and now at last
Comes a Romeo whose blubbering is past.

Here's praise from Sir Thalberg, praise from Shearer,
Praise from Max Herzberg, making it clearer
Why school boys all should pay to come nearer.
Here's praise from Sir Leslie, praise from Cukor,
The kind of praise that is relished by Zukor.
Will's place among scholars has not shrunk,
Here also is praise from Professor Strunk.

Get not a swell'd head, O polychrome bust,
Marking the home of a dramatist's dust!
Forget all your trials, forget your ills,
Now you're the hero of Beverly Hills.

John Mason Brown, dramatic critic of the New York Post, *is the author of several books on the theatre, including "Upstage: the American Theatre in Performance" and "Letters from Greenroom Ghosts."*

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The Bowling Green by Christopher Morley

The Folder

S.R.L. in Borneo

A SUBSCRIBER very kindly let us see a letter she has received from a friend in Sandakan, British North Borneo, to whom she sent a Gift Subscription of the *S. R. L.* "I am anticipating a great deal of pleasure from them. Their coming to me will only begin their life in Borneo. When I finish with them they will go down the east coast of Borneo to Tawau to the District Officer there. From him they will go to a Eurasian rubber planter, one of the most widely read persons I have ever known. Where they will go after I do not know, but I do know that their life as literature will only be ended with their physical disintegration.

"We are always picked threadbare of our magazines. And as I am rather a slow reader I have sometimes even resorted to hiding special issues which I wished to munch over at leisure. And then my husband is sure to come to me with a rebuking air and ask, 'What have you done with such-and-such? Poor Mr. Lam [the Chinese teacher] is very anxious to read the last of those articles.' And there am I, impeding the progress of the whole race!"

Samoan Expert Needed

With many other readers we had gathered the impression that the Samoan name for Robert Louis Stevenson, *Tusitala*, meant "teller of tales." But Miss Marjorie Candee, of the Seamen's Institute, raises a question. She says: "Rear Admiral Elliot Snow, C.C., U.S.N., of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, has written to us as follows in reference to the ship *Tusitala:*

> As I recall what little I learned of the Samoan language some 48 years ago, the two words afi tusi (meaning a match) meant *fire writing*—the act of striking a match resembled the stroke of a pen or pencil in writing. So all these years since I have rendered *Tusitala* as a *writer* of tales and not a *teller* of tales. Whence did you (or the editor) derive your rendering of this word?

Several reference books have translated it as the *teller* of tales and I shall greatly appreciate advice from some student of Samoan so that I may be correct when I next mention the ship."

Conrad's descriptions of the Congo (in *Heart of Darkness*) refer of course to the upper waters of that river. But they impart a lasting impression of strangeness and terror, so I was all the more surprised when C. B. showed me a snapshot taken near the mouth of the great river—a view looking as open and tranquil as Lake Champlain. The picture was taken between Boma and Matadi, by José X. Smollack, purser of S.S. *West Kebar.*

Readers of *Heart of Darkness* may be glad to be reminded that Conrad's Congo Diary, notes of his overland journey from Matadi to Stanley Pool, are reprinted in *Last Essays* (Doubleday, 1926).

Troubles of De Quincey

Professor Willard Hallam Bonner's *De Quincey at Work*—which bears the unusual imprint of *Airport Publishers, Buffalo*—gives fascinating glimpses "of the indefatigable labors of an old man descending pen and candle in hand to the grave." I commend this book particularly to that excellent young sorority at Smith College, the P. D. Q. (Perpetuators of De Quincey). Professor Bonner has divulged a large number of hitherto unpublished letters of the Opium Eater, and reprints also the delightful correspondence of De Quincey's daughters with Mr. and Mrs. James T. Fields. This exorbitantly interesting little book should really be Required Reading for anyone in training to be a publisher.—Troubles that drive one's self quite goofy are always merry entertainment when read of elsewhere. Here is one of De Quincey's many cries of despair while working on proofs or overdue for copy and suffering from his usual "ineffable haunting agitation of nerves." He writes:—"It seems as if to the very last my destiny were to cause delays. For this morning sometime before 9 a boy called for the proofs—and though the time was unexpectedly early he might easily have had them if there had been any means of giving him a *seat* whilst I rose from bed to look for them, as all were ready last night. But the want of disposable rooms causes a difficulty at that early hour."—Another note (in 1856) expresses some of his agitations:—

"I am concerned to confess that I have quite broken down . . . been baited by Dr. W. to dine with a party invited (without consulting me) to meet myself;—secondly and worse than that by Mrs. Wilson on the plea that I, for the purpose of cutting open books, borrowed 3 knives of a certain set now wanted for the Dr's dinner party—so that all papers for a year back were to be examined."

There was never any author whose annoyances are more fun to read about than De Q. His daughter Emily expressly warned Mrs. Publisher Fields against visiting her father's workroom. "He has no sense of smell, & the consequence is he thinks that he has pitched on the cleanest lodgings in Edinburgh but they are even dirty for Scotch lodgings."

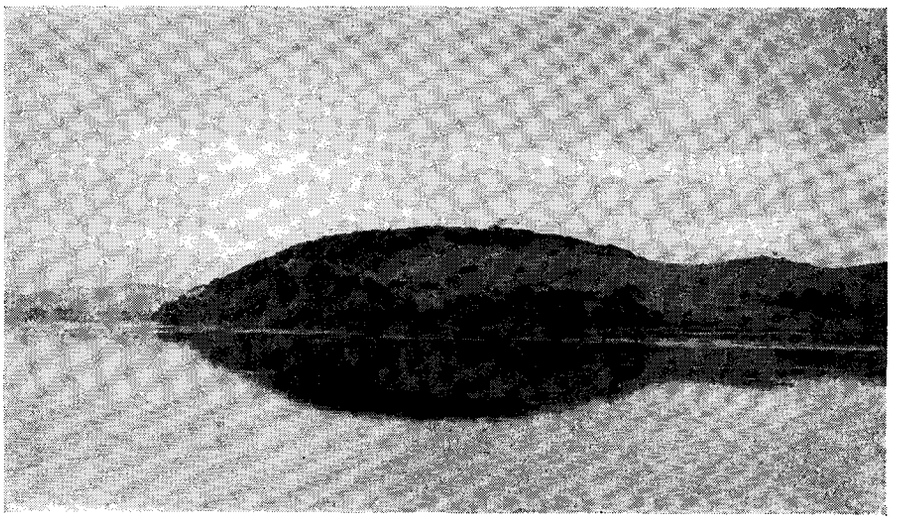
Ampersands

&&& A reader in Japan sends us a letter he received from a famous department store in Tokyo:—

"It is a great pleasure to invite you to the special Exhibition of the typical Japanese dolls.

"The unique gentleness, as Spring, and neatness, as Autumn, will be only given by the lofty art of doll. A good doll must be a best companion, a fancy goods, a tiny article of furniture in a family and we can also say that it will give a great consolation to us in our daily life."

&&& Elmer Davis says that his circulating library dealer—Al Gruber, on Amsterdam Avenue—reports Santayana's *The Last Puritan* the biggest money-maker he ever had. Mr. Davis, a rapid



CONGO RIVER BETWEEN BOMA AND MATADI

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and consecutive reader, only paid 13 cents for his borrowing; but most of Mr. Gruber's clients take a good deal longer. "They really read it through to the end," says Mr. Gruber. "One lady read it $2.24 worth, and several have had it out between $1.50 and $2 of time. Tell Mr. Santayana that for the rental libraries his book is the Ace."

&&& The Press Club of Notre Dame University (Indiana) seeks to raise funds for a memorial on the site of Father John B. Tabb's birthplace, in Amelia County, Virginia. The old Tabb homestead, "The Forest," was destroyed by fire many years ago but enough of its bricks have been found to form the base of a modest monument.

&&& Interested to learn from Lewis and Smith's *Oscar Wilde Discovers America* that Oscar's first stopping place in New York in 1882 was the good old Grand Hotel (Broadway and 31) which we often frequented in our early days in town, and which is still in existence. &&& The Oxford Press announces *Fine Writing* by Logan Pearsall Smith; it is Tract No. 46 of the Society for Pure English, and costs 85 cents. This sounds exciting. &&& Those interested in old time songs should certainly get hold of Scribners' new catalogue *First Editions of Famous American Songs*. From this we glean all sorts of crumbs. Emma Willard wrote *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep* in 1831 aboard the ship *Sully*. &&& *The Wearing of the Green* was first sung in Dion Boucicault's Irish drama *Arrah Na Pogue*, produced in this country in 1865. When the play was done in England the song had to be suppressed. &&& The first edition of *Old Folks at Home* (1851) says "written and composed by E. P. Christy." Christy paid Foster $15 to put his own name on it. &&& *Dixie* was composed in 1859, by Daniel Decatur Emmett, as a "walk-around" for Bryant's Minstrels. *A Life on the Ocean Wave* (1838) began when Epes Sargent was strolling on the Battery, New York City, watching the ships. Henry Russell wrote the music in the back room of Hewitt's music store on Broadway. In 1889 it became the official march of the British Royal Marines. &&& Another of Russell's compositions was *Rockaway; or, on Old Long Island's Sea-Girt Shore*. (1840) &&& A number that should interest Messrs. Nordhoff and Hall is *Come Take Our Boy And We Will Go: A Song of Pitcairn's Island*. Words by William Cullen Bryant, music by E. Ives, Jr. (about 1832).

&&& The Globe-Mermaid Association (of England and America) has been founded, under eminent sponsorship in both countries, in the following hopes (which we reprint from their circular):—

"(1) of rebuilding Shakespeare's old Globe Theatre (destroyed by fire in June 1613), as near as possible to its original site on the south bank of the Thames;

"(2) of rebuilding (conjecturally, yet true to its Tudor tavern type) the old Mermaid Tavern, originally located in Bread Street, Cheapside;

"(3) of founding, in this centre of Shakespeare's London, its first specifically Elizabethan Library and Museum.

"Genuine period furnishing and fittings will be used wherever possible throughout, the element of modern re-production being kept at a minimum. The walls of the Mermaid will be hung with the ancient tapestries, and the staff will be dressed in the fashion of the time, while Elizabethan fare will be available for visitors who call for it.

"At the same time, it is desired not so much to copy, slavishly, the letter, as to recapture the spirit and atmosphere of the original Tavern and Theatre,—not to afford a hunting-ground for cranks and pedants, but to give visitors and students an unequalled opportunity to pass at will from the 20th back to the 16th Century." &&& The difficulty about cranks and pedants is that they never recognize themselves as such. The Bowling Green, though convinced of its own moderation, has no doubt at all that there are plenty of readers who find it both cranky and pedantic. &&& Anyhow we wish all fortune to the Globe-Mermaid scheme; its local representative is Mrs. Norbert Lyons, 745 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Measured Mile

(Reading time fifty seconds)

Parallel ribbons of concrete,
No other traffic in sight,
Purr of the motor disguises
Latent mechanical might:
Now is the chance to determine
Whether the dealer was right.

Timing the start to split second,
Master of time and of space,
Caution goes into the discard,
Mad with the thrill of the race;
Mere vindication of power
Only excuse for the pace.

Ninety yards short of the finish,
All running smoothly till now,
Then, in an instant, disaster
Looms without warning, and how?
Protean fate walks the highway
Garbed as a casual cow.

Brake application proves futile,
Causing the motor to sway
Into the Arms Everlasting
Via soft shoulders of clay:
Serving as headstone, the milestone
Marks the home-stretch on life's way.

Arthur W. Bell.

Mr. Bell adds: "The above bit of Safety First propaganda was written before I ever read *The Last Puritan* where the death of Oliver is caused by his striking his head against a mile-stone, which goes to show that Santayana and I think alike."

HALLDOR LAXNESS

World without Hope

SALKA VALKA. By Halldor Laxness. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1936. $2.50.

Reviewed by Phillips D. Carleton

HALLDOR LAXNESS has portrayed a world without hope, without gentleness, without even the concept of progress. "Perhaps," said an old man in the fishing village, "you young people will be able to become human beings, even if we older ones haven't succeeded." The words have the shadow of hope in them, but the author never allows that hope to burgeon.

In this fishing village on the coast of Iceland, the common people live in such misery that the birth of a child is a misfortune, and death a wretched commonplace. The children grow up rickety and ill-nourished. Religion is a faltering solace; love a biological urge that brings disaster. It is noteworthy that these people sunk in a common misery, living at the level of beasts, still maintain a jealous watch over one another's morals, and though all succumb, all are at various times under social ostracism. The civil and state officials are either corrupt or indifferent to the poverty of their charges; the great merchant Bolgesen holds them as well as the people themselves in bondage. He is the only employer of labor; he has the only store; he alone gives credit in the evil days—and reaps ample profits. Nor is Nature kind; the winter is long, gray, and intolerable; the summer brief and rainy. The miseries of the people are aggravated by the spread of consumption, catarrh, and skin diseases.

One group of the populace—the seamen—start to benefit themselves at the cost of the shore workers; the town is divided by snarling hate. Then communism comes to town and there begin the long privations of a strike and port blockade. Even now the author allows no ameliora-

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tion of the grim scene. The central government of Iceland is changing hands, and the newcomers are using the communistic enthusiasm to remove antagonists. The long strike ends by giving new masters to the village; the new coöperative is quietly absorbed; the dreams, feeble as they were, fade and the village sinks back into a lethargy more confirmed than ever. Mr. Laxness does not believe for a minute that these villagers have learned the most elementary lessons of union or coöperation.

Salka Valka, the daughter of a woman marooned in this town, is the one through whom we see these happenings: she is a member of the seamen's union; she first fights and then falls in love with the communistic leader. He deserts her and his cause; she stands in the end momentarily at peace in a false glow of martyrdom.

The vision that Halldor Laxness holds of the world—or at least of the Icelandic world—is wholly dark: the forces of nature are harsh and terrifying; the people themselves are sunk in a misery from which there is no redemption; the brief flame of the spirit is quenched soon by hard economic circumstance. The only hope of the average inhabitant is that he may have bright moments which can never be rooted out of memory. This vision of the world must have been reached after profound disillusion; it has the great virtue of being of necessity a point of departure toward some affirmative level. Logically Mr. Laxness must seize on some point of light in this abyss of despair if he is to continue to deal in literary values and not direct action. Meanwhile this book bears witness to a fairly unrelenting stare on the gross realities of existence.

Perplexities of a Little Nation

THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE PHILIPPINES. By George A. Malcolm. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co. 1936. $5.

Reviewed by THEODORE ROOSEVELT

JUSTICE MALCOLM'S book is well worth reading. The style is clear and correct, the flow of thought easy. What is more, the material is handled in such fashion as to make it interesting for those who do not know the Philippines as well as for those who do.

There is an old saying in the Philippine Islands that those who visit them for two weeks always write a book, but those who stay longer never do. Justice Malcolm is the fortunate exception. He has made the Islands his home. He has lived there as an active and important part of Philippine affairs. For a quarter of a century he has seen and taken part in the various moves that have made their history. All the important individuals, both American and Filipino, are known to him, known to him not merely by name but personally and by reputation. Though there are fourteen million inhabitants spread over the islands that dot the Pacific for many hundreds of miles, the Philippines are in many ways a small community. As such a man who lives there and takes an interest is far more intimately acquainted with the character, antecedents, and actions of the important men than is the case in a country such as ours, he can make a better estimate of their motives.

Frankly, when I started the book I did not expect to find it as good and to be as much interested as I was. I thought it would be the saga of a man who had spent a quarter of a century in the Philippines and would hark back to "the good old days, the days of the Empire." Most Americans who served there over a long period inevitably tend to divide into two camps. The first is composed of those who think little of the Filipinos and see little of ability or worth in them as a people. The second is represented by the group which blindly and sentimentally praises them, declaring that they have no faults, no matter how self-evident.

Of course both are wrong. The Filipinos are delightful people with happy characteristics and real abilities and with equally evident failings. Justice Malcolm genuinely cares for the people but is not blinded by his affection. He sees their virtues and his liking for them is clear in every chapter; but he sees also their failings and the inevitable future that lies before them when they face the stormy years of Asian politics as a little nation necessary to the political plans of Japan.

His book deals with all aspects of the Philippines—its history, its resources, its people, its governmental setup, its possible future. He pays a fine tribute and a well-merited one to the Americans who have given their lives to service in the Islands. Personally I have seen colonial servants of all nations all over the world and I have never met a better, more competent, and more devoted group than the Americans in the Philippines.

There is little that I have to take issue with in the entire book. I think my principal criticism is on the ethnological side. I think Justice Malcolm has not drawn this picture correctly. He has made the Filipinos appear more homogeneous than they really are. As a matter of fact, though there has been a general intermingling of the various strains of blood, there is still great diversity. In the Island of Luzon, for example, the Ilocanos, who represent, according to the best ethnological opinion, the second Indonesian wave of settlement, are as different from the Bicolanos as can be. The Ilocanos are short, thickset, and dark colored, whereas the Bicolanos are slight and of very light cream color. A clear illustration of the racial diversity is the fact that there are seventeen languages spoken which are thoroughly dissimilar. For example, a senator campaigning in a northern middle district in Luzon might well find his constituents speaking Pangasinan, Pampangan, Ilocano, and Tagalog.

In closing, I want again to say that the book is interesting, clear, and I think well worth reading by anyone who wishes to get a picture of the Philippines and their recent history.

Theodore Roosevelt was Governor-General of the Philippines, 1932-1933.

INAUGURATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE PHILIPPINES

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Modern Poetry

(*Continued from page 4*)

he is working all the time consciously or unconsciously towards that end. He cannot study the nature of life for long without realizing that the external functioning of life is an essential part of its nature; that being includes behavior, that psychology implies sociology, that growth is meaningless without organic form. Maturity in both art and life implies that the fragments shall have been developed into some vital pattern; that some cathedral shall have been built upon the waste land, that some bridge shall span chaos.

What the poet achieves in the way of beliefs and integration of personality will, if left to itself as it were, inevitably appear in his poetry (as it does now in the poetry of Eliot). It will be one of the planes on which his poetry can be discussed, one of the levels on which it can be enjoyed. Unluckily it is the only plane and level on which so many readers do discuss poetry; and therefore the champions of symbolism and surrealism have demanded that the values of art shall be recognized as distinct from the values of life, that poetry shall be "vision without meaning." Eliot himself in one of his early essays, speaks of the "meaning" of a poem as something detachable, likening it to the piece of meat which the old-fashioned burglar brought in to keep the dog quiet. But neither poetry nor the poet can be dismembered in this way.

The clever, who can discriminate between artistic and moral values, are always in the minority. To them belong the highest and most rarefied delights of poetry, but these inevitably include, even if they go beyond, its simple pleasures; and the good are right to cling to their instinct that the values of art and life cannot really be separated. It is natural and inevitable that there should be this unsophisticated approach to poetry, for one of the eternal functions of the poet is that, whatever else he may do, above all he reveals experience to his fellow men. He is articulate beside their dumbness; he can give words, the best words in the best order, to what they only feel and mumble. It is useless to declare that the value of poetry is never what it says, but what it is, and that anything which can be expressed in prose is not the poem; for in all the poetry which continues to delight mankind what it means, what it says, is contained in what it is. It is an essential and integral part of the whole structure of the poem. It may not be stated in so many words, but implicitly it will be its heart and core.

> God guard me from those thoughts men think
> In the mind alone;
> He who sings a lasting song
> Thinks in a marrow-bone;

But he *thinks:* mind and feeling are one. "The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity": nothing is left out.

> O Rose, thou art sick!
> The invisible worm
> That flies in the night,
> In the howling storm,
>
> Has found out thy bed
> Of crimson joy,
> And his dark secret love
> Does thy life destroy.

Great poetry exists on intuitive, symbolic, intellectual, emotional, moral, and sensuous planes all at the same time. It works on the imagination of the reader with an exquisite fusion of effects, but it is his whole being that is satisfied, as it is the whole being of the poet which participates in the act of creation.

When the principle of fully coördinated structure, of organic life and power, is expanded from the creation of an individual experience into a vision of the world at large, it results in the myths and stories in which most of the greatest poetry of the world lives. The post-war age has proved itself an age of lyric poetry, which is very natural from the character of its subject matter. Neither myth nor drama can be created from a sense of personal disharmony; the only structural pattern which can emerge is a personal phantasmagoria such as "The Waste Land." Hart Crane tried something bigger in "The Bridge." He had the true poet's instinct towards an architecture of the human consciousness, and its relation to its environment in space and time—a structure of words which should span his vision of the contemporary world as the Bridge's triumphant span for ever embodied the vision of *its* creator. But he was not equal to the mastery of the thing. His own personality was too splintered and tortured and undisciplined to achieve a wide and steady vision. Structurally, on both spiritual and formal planes, the poem remains a muddle: an interesting and unevenly created series of symbols, though the "melting down" power of the poetic imagination is often at white heat in it. Individual moments are "carried alive into the heart by passion," but there are none of the larger, serener, and profounder satisfactions of deeply resolved patterns of vitality: the quality which made Shelley speak of poets as the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

But this instinct of the poetic nature towards myth-making is always working and striving towards the marrowy richness of fully comprehensive creative thought, whatever social facts or literary fashions may interrupt its development. The unintelligibility of the modern poets has its roots in both fact and fashion. It is a revolt against the Victorian conception of poetry as the willing handmaid of society and religion, and of the poet as the Polonius of artists, the liaison officer between God and suburbia. It is a result, too, of the glimpses given by psychological research into the complexities of the individual ego, and of the general distrust of the intellect and the exaltation of the intuitive which was the immediate effect of the new knowledge. Man inevitably finds himself more self-conscious than he has ever been before, and during the last twenty years certain original and creative minds have found themselves driven into new and complex ways of writing which have been those which gave poetic expression to their sense of emotional discord. As is always the way, many unoriginal and imitative minds have followed the cult of "difficult" poetry. Some of the original minds (such as that of Ezra Pound) have hardened without development, and continue down the years to strum meaninglessly those same rhythms which were once fresh and energetic. But the poets with sap and fibre to them do not stand still, any more than the world about them does. "Murder in the Cathedral" is the matured poetry of the youth who wrote "The Waste Land." It has all the vivid concentration of language and variety of rhythm which gave significance to the earlier poem even when it remained logically obscure, and it is enriched with an intellectual and spiritual content which "brings the whole soul of man into activity," whether one agrees or not with its particular framework of ideas. Nor is it likely that Eliot will be the only poet who changes and develops with maturity. The new popularity of the poetic drama, for example, is a very hopeful sign.

And although one can point out what one believes to be the weaknesses and limitations of the post-war poets, and can lecture them on their mistakes, Time will do much more than criticism. A poet can only write as he himself honestly sees and feels his experience.

> Not I, not I, but the wind that blows through me!
> . . . I yield myself and am borrowed. . . .

and it is a valueless kind of critic who simply denies the name of poetry to what he personally does not like. If minds as sensitive as those of Herbert Read and Michael Roberts find a poetic experience in words which make nonsense, we may be sure it is there. This need not, however, prevent us from feeling that the experience is a very esoteric and a very limited one, nor need it prevent us from believing that any way of writing which deliberately makes communication between poet and reader difficult will always prove to be a passing phase in poetic history, or the cult of a very minor group. For it is the common nature of man to communicate with his fellows, and it is the very sum and substance of the poet's nature, since words are the lifeblood of his spirit, to communicate with his fellow men more clearly yet more profoundly, more simply yet more mysteriously, more intensely yet more variously, than any of the rest of mankind.

Elizabeth Drew is the author of "Discovering Poetry" and "The Enjoyment of Literature."

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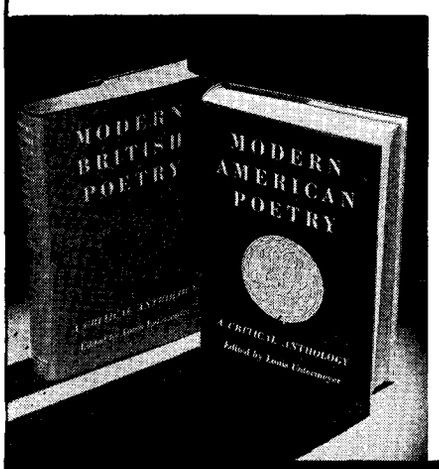

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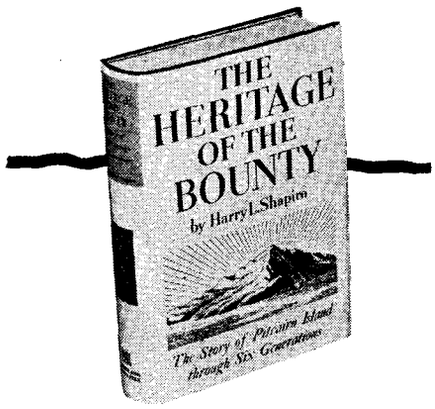

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The New Books

Fiction

WOMAN ALIVE. By Susan Ertz. Appleton-Century. 1936. $2.

Suppose all the women in the world should die—except one? What chaos men would make of things alone!

This is the theme of Susan Ertz's "Woman Alive." She places her story in England, 1985. Science has made living conditions unbelievably beautiful, has lengthened life, and dulled pain, but has failed to kill the warring instincts of man. Destruction of property is no longer an object of war, however, only the destruction of life. Following a brief but hideous gas war, a strange disease is generated from the dead which proves to be fatal to women only.

With man's future thus jeopardized, the one remaining woman becomes the Power, and as such wields her constant threat—"No killings!"

"Woman Alive" was passable woman's magazine fiction when recently serialized but is not an important novel. To one who has read "The Galaxy," "Madame Claire," and "The Proselyte," it is a strange and not particularly satisfying Susan Ertz. The outcome of the actual story is quite obvious, its chief interests being the ingenious picture of a refined Buck Rogers world to come and more than an occasional nice bit of satire.

Women's clubs and anti-war organizations will find this a handbook.

G. N.

FLY AWAY BLACKBIRD. By Jerrard Tickell. Morrow. 1936. $2.50.

We can vouch for the fact that this is a good novel to read on the train, as we sat up late in our berth, travelling South, finishing the romance of Nicola Lenke, the little Austrian, and Peter Conroy, the attractive if unintelligent young Irishman. Mr. Tickell has the gift for writing readably that most Irishmen seem to possess as a natural heritage. And we must confess that it was a relief to read of two such clean and decent lovers. The author ably conveys the charm of the simple good times they had together. When it came to Peter's politics and standing for Parliament we could not find his career either very interesting or particularly admirable, though the description of the bye-election furnishes some entertainment despite Mr. Tickell's pleasure in caricaturing anything intellectual and liberal. His descriptions of Portsborough, for which constituency Peter stands as the conservative candidate, is a salient piece of writing, even though he seems to us to interpret the situation in a short-sighted way. Peter's loyal and embattled aunt, and the "comic relief," Captain Alsopp, are ingratiating characters, if somewhat stock—and Nicola's proud, haggard, Austrian father, and "the-villain-still-pursued-her" Otto von Mühlenthal, whom she marries on her father's account, are well portrayed—did not Mr. Tickell's too pat plot, which unfolds neatly and expeditiously (to say nothing of fortuitously) raise a reasonable doubt in the reader's mind.

These lovers, with beautiful bodies and clean minds, but not—regrettably—much brains, are perfect screen-fodder. Yet it does not do to examine too closely such a Springtime romance. Within its decided limitations it is enjoyable, and shows in the author a knack of narrative. Mr. Tickell knows his backgrounds, and next time, we hope, may write something of significance.

W. R. B.

Miscellaneous

THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES. A Film by H. G. Wells. Macmillan. 1936. $1.35.

The latest phase of the myriad-minded H. G. Wells is writing for the screen, and he has initiated also the publishing of his scenarios in book form. "The Man Who Could Work Miracles" takes us back to one of his most delightful early short stories which he has now adapted as a talking picture. In a brief Prologue and Epilogue to the film he gives us the larger implications of a short story that originally existed without any such frame. This, he tells us, is to guard against any hint of "symbolism" weakening the main production. The necessary sustaining music for the film also draws his brief comment. Then we have his elabo-

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THREE DIED BESIDE THE MARBLE POOL *Carl M. Chapin* (Crime Club: $2.)	Seven killings in six days, near abandoned quarry, almost drive Fed. Investigator Anderson to tears.	A wild and gory yarn with corpses in every corner, suspects galore, a million in loot, and unceasing excitement.	Super-thriller
THE DARK GREEN CIRCLE *Edward Shanks* (Bobbs-Merrill: $2.)	Observations from autogyro reveal ancient English fortifications and eventually uncover grim secret of secluded village.	The sleuthing is mostly along archæological lines but it involves some shivery matters and strange atavistic personalities.	For those who like Arthur Machen

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ration of the story for the movies, and all this reviewer can say is that he thinks it is "immense." Indubitably we shall see "The Man Who Could Work Miracles" on the screen very soon, and shall have an even better time at it than we had at "Things to Come." The latter is far more ambitious, sometimes decidedly impressive, but entirely humorless—and its antiseptic future seems too completely wrapped in cellophane; whereas this other film really gives you Man in the Universe and a philosophical conception conveyed pictorially in a memorable manner. All of which emerges from what the author dubs an "imaginative comedy." Wells is—to tell the truth—a bit of a miracle-worker himself; and in certain respects we look to him confidently to revolutionize the talking pictures. Is it possible that he will actually be able to make them "significant"? Honestly, we shouldn't wonder! L. C. H.

PENNY FOOLISH. A Book of Tirades and Panegyrics. By Osbert Sitwell. Macmillan. $3.75.

Here is a whole hamper-full of brief essays of no overwhelming importance, written for the most part in an agreeable style, idiosyncratic and thoroughly literate. When Mr. Sitwell writes his best poetry he can give most of these prose pieces cards and spades, for pungency and biting wit. In his best short stories he has created a few gems. These essays for the most part seem a little thin. Yet he rather amusingly vents his dislike of railroad travel, of his schooling both private and public, of horses, dogs, and some kinds of Americans; and his feeling of mild antipathy toward Mr. Noel Coward, Sir John Squire, Mr. Alfred Noyes, and certain littérateurs named Leavis, is productive of well-pondered lines; just as his analysis of the decay of individuality and of the merit of laziness is quite sound. "On the Belittlement of the Great" is a justified examination of the methods of modern biographers. Mr. Sitwell is often subtly right and always impeccably poised. He seems to have developed fascist leanings, which is a pity. We sympathize more with his intermittent belief in ghosts. But, on the whole, this is an attractive book for an idle afternoon. It is urban and urbane, can richly relish Dudley Armitage, Esq., or concisely express contempt for modern warfare; the cooing of the stockdove is pleasantly varied by the sudden electrifying sting of the tarantula. It can soothe the senses with a style unobtrusively fine and then chime precisely with one's own pet prejudice. In short, it has the virtues of its defects.
W. R. B.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 112)

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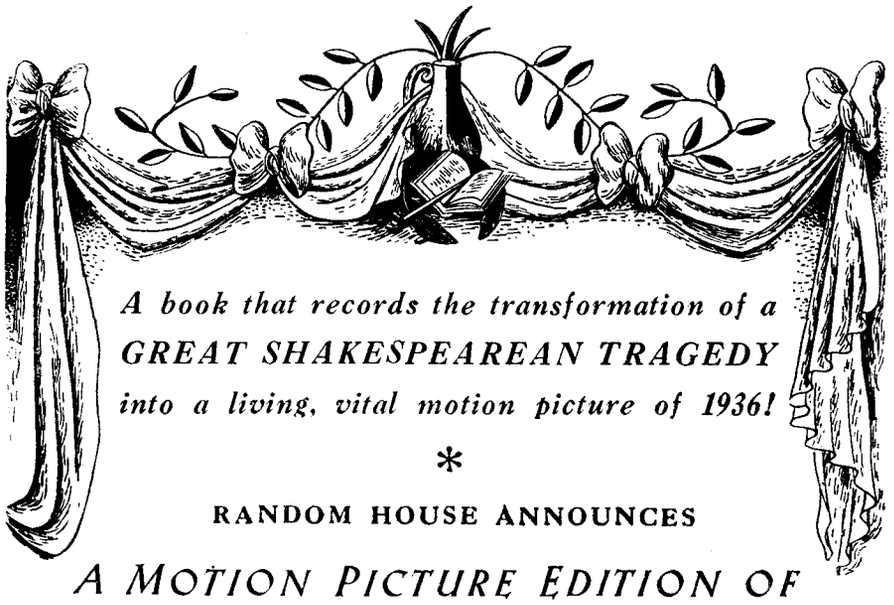
He had been freezing unawares all night long.—There were thousands of men who would have given years off their lives to freeze for twelve hours undisturbed.—A little loss of freedom seemed to be an aid to self-discovery.



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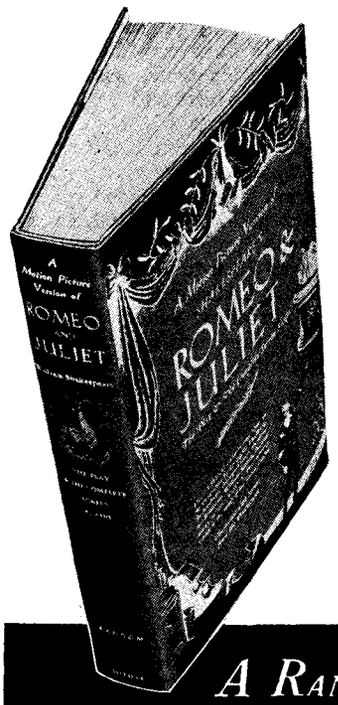

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The PHŒNIX NEST

CONTEMPORARY POETRY: BY WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

A RECENT article in the *Nation* by *Ben Belitt* estimates that there are 127,000,000 poets in America! He speaks of the anthology "or, in the more fashionable parlance, the omnibus, in which the occupant generally pays as he enters and is, as the phrase goes, taken for a ride." He is speaking of the so-called "vanity" anthologies. He mentions also the state-by-state canvass of American poets being undertaken by *Henry Harrison.* The title of Mr. Belitt's article is apt—"127,000,000 Poets, or The Muse's Guinea Pigs!" I myself have campaigned before against the too-inclusive anthology, and have received some hot retorts in the process; but there is no doubt that there are a great many poets so-called in America whose only interest in the art is rushing into print with hasty and ill-considered stuff and material of no possible poetic value. The burden of this sort of thing in the small books and magazines, to say nothing of the anthologies that come to me, has become well-nigh intolerable. Would, therefore, that Mr. Belitt's article might be salutary. It is all very well to have carefully selected regional anthologies which really come up to a standard of taste and don't scramble together all sorts of heterogeneous material—but such are not the regional anthologies we are, for the most part, getting at present. There has been spawned a tremendous generation of minnows in the pool of contemporary poetry; or you might compare them to a cloud of locusts over the poetic landscape. I have always been all for spreading widely an interest in poetry, but this new spectacle is becoming daunting. . . . This is Poetry Week, and as a result of it, you will find in this issue of the *Review* a special essay on poetry.

Several recent books worth noting on the poetic art: *Mary J. J. Wrinn's* "The Hollow Reed" (Harper) explores the craft of verse for the beginner. Here are models from the older poets and prentice work by younger ones, with suggested exercises. Miss Wrinn teaches at George Washington High School in this city. She knows of what patterns poetry consists, and her sections in the book are well thought and worked out. A fresh and individual sort of textbook. A new edition of *Hubbell* and *Beaty's* "An Introduction to Poetry" is also welcome. I met *Mr. Hubbell* recently down at Duke University. *Mr. Beaty* is Professor of English at Southern Methodist. Macmillan issues this volume. It also contains lavish examples of the art.

"The New Book of English Verse" (Macmillan), edited by *Charles Williams,* is a distinguished anthology which rules out all poems that have appeared either in *Palgrave's* "Golden Treasury" or in *Quiller-Couch's* "The Oxford Book of English Verse." A favorite of mine, *Thomas Lovell Beddoes,* is done right by, and when such a grand, mad thing of the past as "Tom o' Bedlam's Song" is rescued, that alone should make the book notable. There is space for long extracts. *Drayton's* "Nimphidia" is well represented, and here is Part I of *Coleridge's* "Christabel." The book is an excellent supplement to the great anthologies it now accompanies.

Frederick W. Ziv has gathered together a collection of poems by poets killed in the World War under the title of "The Valiant Muse" (Putnam). There is too little *Wilfred Owen* and too much *Joyce Kilmer. Sassoon,* the best poet of the war, did not fall at the front so, naturally, he is not here. The poetry in general tends to the sentimental and is not of large calibre. Some of the best poems are not concerned with the immediate terrain at all, but are nostalgic memories, like one of *Julian Grenfell's,* who died at twenty-seven, struck dead at Ypres. He muses on the hills of India:

Here, in the hills of ages
I meet thee face to face;
O mother Earth, O lover Earth.
Look down on me with grace,
Give me thy passion burning,
And thy strong patience, turning
All wrath to power, all yearning
To truth, thy dwelling-place.

The form of that poem is not, of course, unreminiscent; but decidedly it is not martial, though it *is* valiant. A book like this rouses bitterness in the breast when one thinks of the gay young manhood of several lands so casually snuffed out. There is the argument that individual life is of little value when it can be sacrificed for a cause—but what have the nations learned from all these bright deaths?

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Letters to the Editor

(*Continued from page* 9)

general. Of course I recognize—and the book explicitly states—that there are very different degrees of relationship shading from unquestioned and complete control down to an intangible but genuine indirect influence. This aspect of my thesis is certainly not new in American thinking. Power operates through many different channels radiating from a relatively small number of dominating centers. The book attempts to analyze many different aspects of power and to show how these re-enforce one another. Mr. Kennedy is so much preoccupied with discrediting the lists—which show certain types of relationship, carefully stated—that he almost totally disregards all the other important elements in the picture.

Fifth, and really amazing, is Mr. Kennedy's misquotation from a personal conversation. I never disclaimed the title, for I do sincerely believe that the Wall Street powers analyzed in the book do *rule* American banking, industry, and politics. But at the same time, my own primary interest in the study has been in the structure of finance capital, as a stage of capitalist development, rather than in the individual rulers. The power of finance capital, as expressed in the power of special groups and the ways in which they function, would hardly have been a title! Some such thought as this I did try to convey to Mr. Kennedy. I did not fully realize that when he had asked for an interview he was really looking for any stick to beat the dog!

ANNA ROCHESTER.

Mr. Kennedy Replies

SIR:—It is a little difficult to reply briefly to Miss Rochester's letter and it does not make too much sense to take space in your columns with an argument that cannot be entirely clear to those who have not read Miss Rochester's book. On the other hand, I suppose that her letter makes a rebuttal incumbent.

1. I do not think it was essential to have quoted the sub-title, particularly when the main title so well expressed the spirit of the book.

2. I omitted companies for which no assets were given because I was discussing Miss Rochester's asset totals and did not want to confuse the issue.

3. No definition which lists companies as having relations with a banker "through carrying deposits or underwriting security issues" can be considered as carefully reached because the two relationships are so different that they should be separately considered. The Senate Committee listed connections with commercial banks but the Committee was publishing information, not writing a thesis.

4. Then Standard of New Jersey should not be discussed in the Morgan section of the book.

5. I believe that my memory of the personal interview was accurate. I am not responsible for Miss Rochester's having selected a title which did not express her "primary interest." And nothing is more certain than that Miss Rochester's book will be read and discussed as "Rulers of America," not as "A Study of Finance Capital." E. D. KENNEDY.

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May Wine

CLEMENSANA.—Mark Twain's "1601, or Conversation at the Social Fireside as It Was in the Time of the Tudors" is one of the minor classics of the literature of escape—author-escape, not reader. Into it its fashioner dumped most of the lusty old four-letter words and a few longer ones which convention equally does not condone in print, though it could hardly keep them out of his own conversation. Its Anglo-Saxon forthrightness has maintained "1601" as an under-cover masterpiece ever since its original surreptitious and wholly unauthorized appearance in galley-proof form in 1880. Irvin Haas has compiled a check-list of all known editions which, in combination with the text itself, has been issued by the Black Cat Press of Chicago in an edition of 300 copies ($3). Mr. Haas records twenty-two varieties of "1601" and concedes that "many ephemeral editions have been issued of which there is no trace today." He seems to have done remarkably well to pin down as many as he has. His citations include such diverse imprints as West Point, Cincinnati, Louisville, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Chicago, New York, and La Canada, California.

Much in little.—Fred B. Millett of the University of Chicago has edited a third and enlarged edition of John M. Manly's and Edith Rickert's "Contemporary British Literature" which, while not especially designed for collectors, can none the less render them sterling service (Harcourt, Brace & Company, $2.50). There are 232 compact author check-lists —J. B. Priestley's suppressed and all but unknown "A Chapman of Rhymes" is listed, which is pretty good evidence of completeness. All existing bibliographies of the authors discussed are identified, so that the reader in search of detailed collations learns exactly where to look for them. The book is a highly serviceable and inexpensive manual for the collector of modern British firsts.

Ancien régime.—No. 48 in the valuable Heartman's Historical Series is "New Orleans in 1805: A Directory and a Census," with an introduction by Charles L. Thompson, issued in an edition of ninety-nine copies by the Pelican Galleries of New Orleans ($5). The census was taken by a duly authorized official bearing the fine old Creole name of Matthew Flannery, and the painstaking result of his investigations has never before been put in print. There were three estates among the populace—*habitants blancs, gens de couleur libre,* and *esclaves*—and Flannery duly listed them street by street. One result, according to Mr. Thompson, is to prove that the population of New Orleans at the time was not between ten and twenty thousand, as various commentators have estimated it, but closer to six thousand. It is interesting to note that the city's lighting system comprised eighty sperm-oil lamps, and that the most important commodity was water.

Leave to print.—Sidney Kramer, 5558 Drexel Avenue, Chicago, writes: "I am at work on a history and bibliography of the publishing firm of Stone & Kimball, 1893-1897. If any of your readers have correspondence to, from, or relating to this firm or its successor, Herbert S. Stone & Co., 1896-1906, I should like to have them communicate with me. I shall also welcome information concerning books not published by but privately printed under the direction of these firms, or of Ingalls Kimball or Herbert Stone individually." The late Ingalls Kimball had projected an intimate sketch of the firm's career for the *Colophon,* but it was never completed.

Tart rejoinder.—Anthony J. Russo of the Hoosier Bookshop, Indianapolis, recently received a letter from a woman in an Indiana town offering a copy of Cox's "Recollections of the Early Settlement of the Wabash Valley" (1860), a moderate rarity and an important item of local Americana. She was asked to send the book for inspection. It was in desperate shape—binding shabby and worn, hinges cracked, and other defects —and the owner's theory that glue in large doses was a panacea for hurt books had not helped matters. The book was returned with the comment that it was useless on account of its poor condition. In return came a pencil-scrawled postal card which read: "I am thanking you for returning my book. I hope when you reach the age of this book you will look as good. Good luck and God bless you."

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

MR. M. Lincoln Schuster has introduced Old Q to that admirable quarterly *Scripta Mathematica,* published at Yeshiva College, Amsterdam Avenue and 186 Street. Professor Cassius J. Keyser's article therein, about Pareto, caused us to ruminate that maybe *The Mind and Society* has some good stuff in it after all. ☞For among the theses discussed by Pareto, says Prof. Keyser, is this:—"That in all grades of society non-logical conduct has been, and is, so prevalent that a science of Man or of Human Society cannot possibly be established without making non-logical conduct a major theme of study." ☞And yet (goodness gracious) is there a single intelligent or mature observer of human life who did not long ago accept that as axiomatic?

☞Those who are genuinely interested in the health and progress of free inquiry in this country should write to the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, for copies of a pamphlet entitled *The John Hopkins University Asks Your Assistance.* The J. H. U., which opened the door to higher education in this country, sixty years ago, gravely needs help to rebuild its depreciated endowments; and this is a responsibility upon all lovers of learning, regardless of their own college or affiliation. ☞The Johns Hopkins pamphlet is our idea of the kind of literary item that collectors might well pay well for and cherish; it is not a dead reminder of some ancient sentimentalism, but an issue of today's urgent living. ☞The American people, busy organizing, has now started a Conversation Institute at 221 Fourth Avenue with "a home study course in conversation." ☞Howard S. Mott, Tenafly, N. J., sends out his second little catalogue of books, including a remarkable collection of H. M. Tomlinson. ☞Pleased to find Goodspeed's monthly pamphlet quoting the immortal saying of Jarrett and Palmer, original producers of *The Black Crook*—"Legs are staple articles, and will never go out of fashion while the world lasts."

☞Gratified obeisance to the Gotham Book Mart for its kind remarks about the S.R.L., in its new catalogue (which deals with obscuranta, goofiana, and nucifers in general.) ☞The Atlantic Prize of $10,000 offered by the Atlantic Monthly and Little, Brown & Co. has been awarded to *I Am The Fox,* a first novel by Winifred Mayne Van Etten of Mt. Vernon, Iowa. Mrs. Van Etten is on the English staff of Cornell College, Iowa. ☞Among previous winners of the Atlantic Prize have been Mazo de la Roche, Ann Bridge, Samuel Rogers.

☞Vrest Orton, once of our own S.R.L. staff, sends an attractive leaflet about his printing shop at Weston, Vermont, where he performs all kinds of print jobs from Wine Lists to Reports of Historical Societies. ☞We hear from all sorts of eager clients of their plans to catch a little business. Evelyn and Roseland Bottome say that their "Little House of Surprises" at 571 Glenbrook Road, Stamford, Conn., offering antiques in glass and china (Blue Staffs., Pink Lustre, Trinket Boxes, Sweetmeat Jars) will show exceptional solicitude to S.R.L. readers. Surely someone, Evelyn says, would like a Trinket Box to keep Trade Winds clippings in?

☞Quercus and associates on the S.R.L. staff enjoyed a visit last week from James Norman Hall—his first trip up from Tahiti in two years. Mr. Hall had his initial opportunity to see the "Mutiny on the Bounty" movie in San Diego two weeks ago. He saw an abridged version in a third-run theatre and enjoyed it very much. Nobody recognized him. ☞Following the success of *Good-bye, Mr. Chips,* Little, Brown announces a prize contest for a novelette between 15,000 and 35,000 words long. MSS to be in by January 1, 1937. The judges are Bernard DeVoto, James Hilton, and Alfred McIntyre, president of Little, Brown.

☞And the Williams & Wilkins Co. of Baltimore offers a prize of $1,000 for the best manuscript on a scientific subject, submitted before July 1, 1937. The MS must be in English, and "of a sort calculated to appeal to the taste of the public at large." 100,000 words is given as the desired length. Judges: Dr. Joseph Wheeler of the Pratt Library, Harry Hansen, Dr. Lyman Bryson of Teachers' College, Columbia (Director of the "Laboratory in Readability"), and David Dietz.

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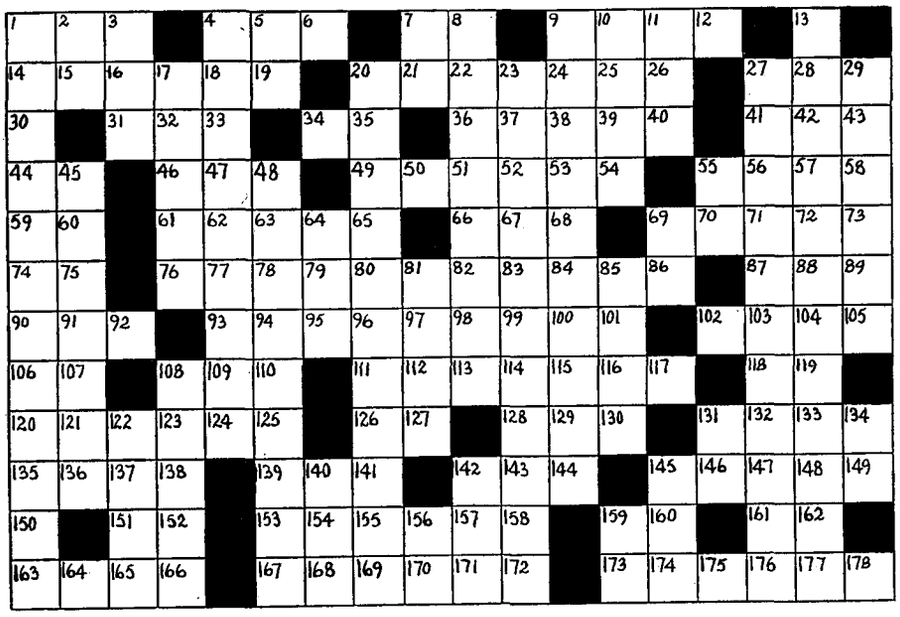
Double-Crostics: No. 113

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-four words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Unless otherwise indicated, the author is English or American.

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 17 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

I. To hesitate (comp.).

II. Quarrelsome.

III. Seat of worship of Demeter.

IV. Trifling talk or action (slang).

V. Marked by elevated principles (comp.).

VI. Extremely delicate.

VII. Treaty port of Manchuria.

VIII. A neat piece of mechanical work (naut.).

IX. Inventor of the spinning jenny.

X. Plaguy, vexatious (colloq.).

XI. Author of "Jean Christophe."

XII. Noted Holland cheese.

XIII. Appears.

XIV. A loser in a struggle.

XV. Epic satire by Byron.

XVI. To attire.

XVII. City in Pennsylvania.

XVIII. Word coinage.

XIX. French composer (1862-1918).

XX. To distribute in portions.

XXI. Digging roots.

XXII. A Shakespearean character.

XXIII. University near Chicago.

XXIV. Foolish, stupid.

WORDS

92 67 42 33 57 26 106 9 108 52 70 40

128 146 176 96 105 32 172 151 66

130 94 35 89 171 126 4

38 84 49 55 153 160

107 10 86 129 20 140 62 110 124 101

71 138 12 15 43 23 95 120

109 162 60 27 91 54 46 143 11

177 83 158 99 29 45 103 37 117

173 104 2 112 65 135 14 36 78

39 150 111 97 34

80 13 114 58 31 8 48

79 145 21 163

81 88 50 5 1

61 85 73 68 174 144 28 156

63 154 122 22 132 142 127

74 118 100 53 87 19

113 134 141 121 59 16 167

47 64 152 115 175 90 6

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147 93 30 75 116 133

72 119 168 17 137 148 166 139 25 157 125 77

123 7 56 24 161

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